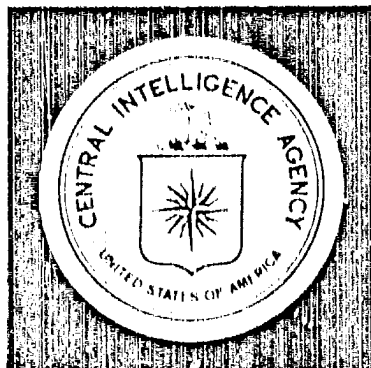


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*SALT and Soviet Decision-Making
Institutions and Actors*

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OPR 114

December 1975

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence

SALT AND SOVIET DECISION-MAKING
INSTITUTIONS AND ACTORS

December 1975



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SUMMARY

The purpose of this short study is to identify those Soviet Institutions and personalities involved in the formulation and implementation of policy on the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks. (SALT).

In general, four groups contribute to Soviet policy on SALT:

The top leadership of the Communist Party, represented by the Politburo, the Defense Council -- a de facto sub-committee of the Politburo -- and the Central Committee Secretariat. The Politburo gives final approval to all major initiatives and agreements;

The Ministry of Defense and its General Staff, which advises on all military and technical aspects of the negotiations;

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The defense industrial complex, represented by the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK) and the production ministries it oversees;

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which influences SALT largely through such personalities as Foreign Minister Gromyko, Ambassador to the US Dobrynin, and Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko.

Within the leadership, General Secretary Brezhnev is the preeminent spokesman for foreign and defense policy and since 1971 he has exercised direct responsibility for SALT. The key military figure in SAL policymaking is Marshal Grechko who, next to Brezhnev, is probably the single most influential personality in determining SAL policies. Linking the political leadership and the military is Party Secretary D. F. Ustinov, who appears to play a central coordinating role.

Available evidence [] reveals the following key aspects of the decision-making process: Prior to and during these negotiations, Brezhnev has relied heavily on the military for advice and support; the General Staff is clearly the key military organization involved in SAL planning;

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the coordination of the planning and staffing of Soviet positions on SALT issues has been exercised through Party channels; Soviet positions are probably formulated and arbitrated within the Defense Council with recommendations sent to the Politburo for final approval.

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SALT AND SOVIET DECISION-MAKING

Institutions and Actors

Four key groups contribute to Soviet policy on SALT. They are the top leadership of the Communist Party represented by the Politburo, its Defense Council, and the Central Committee Secretariat; the military establishment, represented by the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff; the defense industrial complex, represented by the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK), the armaments and space ministries it oversees and to some extent by individual scientists within the Academy of Sciences; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

An extraordinarily large part of the business of the Soviet state, including national security affairs, is conducted at the Politburo level. This deliberative body makes final decisions on all fundamental and many minor issues of foreign and defense policy. The Party Secretariat supervises the execution of the Politburo decisions and has at its disposal a powerful professional staff in the central Party apparatus which gives directions to and monitors performance by the government agencies. The latter are primarily responsible for providing information and technical advice for Party decision-making and carrying out Party directives. In practice, decision-making and policy administration overlap at several points between

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the government and Party structures, and at the top of the Party hierarchy they coalesce completely in the Party and government leaders who sit on the Politburo and Secretariat. Another factor that tends to blur divisions between Party, industry and government is a policy orientation which is almost totally responsive to defense-heavy industry needs on a top priority. This policy orientation appears to be an essential component of Soviet political culture.

The Political Management of National Security

The Politburo is currently comprised of 15 full members with voting rights and 7 candidate members with consultative rights. It is an oligarchical institution which since the mid-1960s has decided policy issues on the basis of collegiality and consensus. While some of its members represent institutions and interests which are directly related to national security policy and others do not, all key decisions on SALT are subject to final review and approval by the Politburo. At important junctures in the SALT process, for example during summit meetings in Moscow in 1972 and 1974, the entire Politburo plus military and technical advisors met several times in lengthy sessions. The results of the 1973 Brezhnev visit to the United States and the 1974 Vladivostok meeting were submitted to the Politburo for its consultation almost immediately upon conclusion of these summits.

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Routine decision-making in regard to SALT, as in other matters, is influenced to a large extent by the personal authority of Brezhnev and the division of labor within the Politburo. Brezhnev is the preeminent spokesman for foreign and defense policy, and since 1971 he has exercised direct responsibility for SALT within the leadership. For the purpose of managing foreign policy, Brezhnev has assembled a personal staff of foreign affairs experts who appear to have substantial authority for coordinating policy and negotiations. These experts probably advise Brezhnev on the broad domestic and international aspects of SALT. None of their backgrounds and career patterns, however, demonstrate substantive knowledge or technical competence vis-a-vis military policy issues.

Below Brezhnev on the Politburo is a core of senior leaders who exercise major influence on national security policy decisions. This group includes President Podgorny, Premier Kosygin, Defense Minister Grechko, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and KGB Chairman Andropov. The latter three leaders were elevated together to full Politburo membership in 1973. It had previously been rare for the bureaucratic chieftains who manage the major national security agencies to be represented in the Politburo.

Another key figure in defense policy-making is candidate Politburo member and Party Secretary Ustinov, who oversees the Soviet armaments industry, working through the Secretariat's

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executive arms, the Central Committee Department of Defense Industry and the VPK. It is the VPK which handles coordination between the Ministry of Defense, ministries involved in military production, and Academy of Sciences' Institutes engaged in military research and development. The VPK is headed by L. V. Smirnov, a deputy chairman of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers who played an important part in the eleventh-hour negotiations surrounding SALT I in Moscow during the May 1972 summit.

Political-military and military-technical policy-making is institutionalized in a specialized Politburo commission, the Defense Council. The Defense Council has dealt with SALT on a number of occasions. Chaired, like the Politburo itself, by Brezhnev, the Defense Council brings together leading political and military officials. Kosygin, Podgorny, Grechko, Ustinov, and Chief of the General Staff Kulikov are believed to be permanent members. There is evidence that Gromyko and sometimes Andropov attend Defense Council meetings on an ad hoc basis. Subordinate officials from the Defense Ministry and the General Staff also may be invited to attend particular Defense Council meetings, as well as Smirnov and VPK representatives.

The Defense Council is ultimately subordinate to the Politburo for which it prepares policy positions and advice. In practice, however, there seems to be a strong tendency for Brezhnev and his

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top colleagues to seek to determine the basic shape of military policy within the Defense Council in anticipation that Politburo approval will generally be forthcoming.

While the top leadership makes all major decisions on SALT, immediate tactical decisions with respect to managing the SALT negotiations may be made one echelon below. Minister Semenov, head of the Soviet SALT delegation, has shed a little light on the Soviet back-stopping process by stating that an informal group, consisting of representatives from various ministries and agencies and working under the general supervision of the Central Committee apparatus, meets whenever necessary to consider SALT problems and provide guidance for the Soviet delegation. Any differences within this group, according to Semenov, are referred to an unidentified higher body described as including Gromyko, Grechko and other defense-related officials. It is possible that this higher body referred to by Semenov is the Defense Council.

The Soviet Military and SALT

Soviet military participation in SALT planning, policy-making and negotiating has been active and vigorous at all levels. The SALT negotiations are the first arms limitation talks in which the military has played a direct and active role. Military officers and experts have served as advisors during other negotiations but not with the influence evident in the case of SALT.

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Moscow The main locus of work on preparation of positions for SALT is in the Ministry of Defense and especially the General Staff. The General Staff is centrally involved by dint of its overall coordinating responsibility for defense planning, weapons research and development, and force posture planning. It reconciles the competing views of the individual branches of the armed services or enforces its own positions, and formulates the military's position on arms limitations. The bulk of the work appears to be carried out in the General Staff's Main Operations Directorate, reflecting a Soviet military view that arms control should be closely tied to the operational requirements of the Soviet Armed Forces. The main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) provides information and analysis on US force deployments and developments and is believed to be responsible for monitoring compliance with arms control agreements.

Next to Brezhnev, Marshal Grechko is probably the single most influential personality in determining Soviet policy on arms limitations. Grechko's rise in policy-making circles correlates with the substantial increase in the military's professional, as opposed to political, autonomy since 1965. The military's present influence, prestige, and role in policy-making are unequalled in Soviet history.

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Geneva Senior Soviet military representation on the Soviet SALT delegation has been divided into what a former military delegate, General Gryzlov, has described as "soldiers" and "technicians."

During the first three rounds of SALT from late 1969 until the end of 1970, the senior "soldier" was the second-ranking member of the Soviet delegation -- Colonel General N. V. Ogarkov, then First Deputy Chief of the General Staff. The senior military technician on the Soviet delegation during these early SALT I sessions was Colonel General Nikolay Alekseyev, an officer with a background in weapons research assigned to the General Staff. Ogarkov was clearly in charge of the military side of the SALT delegation.

In October 1970, Alekseyev was transferred from the General Staff to a new post which subsequently was identified as Deputy Minister of Defense for Armaments. Following this transfer Ogarkov and Alekseyev were not present at the same time during sessions of the negotiations. The Soviets were apparently attempting to finesse the (sensitive) question of the relative rank of the two men.

Currently, Colonel General I. I. Beletsky and Lieutenant General K. A. Trusov are the two military members of the Soviet obligation. Trusov, who has also been involved in weapons research, joined the Soviet delegation in 1971 and is the acknowledged senior

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DATE: OCT 2003

military representative, although he is junior to Beletsky in military rank.

Beletsky has stated that he and Trusov report to different organizations. [REDACTED] Beletsky is now Deputy Chief of the General Staff for General Questions.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Beletsky does have a General Staff background and we believe that he reports directly to and receives guidance from Colonel General M. M. Kozlov, First Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Kozlov, who attended the Vladivostok summit as a military expert, has been noted [REDACTED] as being actively involved in SALT planning in Moscow, and [REDACTED] Kozlov was directly involved in SALT matters.

Trusov, [REDACTED] is Alekseyev's first deputy and logically should report to him. Although Semenov has stated that Alekseyev is not directly involved in SALT, his involvement with armaments suggests that he plays an important indirect role, perhaps in monitoring the technical aspects of the SAL negotiations.

The Defense Industries Sector

The industrial ministries which manufacture hardware for Soviet military and space programs constitute an important,

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Integral, and administratively separate sector of the economy. The defense industries sector exhibits greater continuity of personnel and organization than any other. It has been called an "economy within an economy;" it is technologically more advanced than the civilian sectors, and enjoys perquisites, privileges, and priorities denied to non-military production activities.

The VPK -- a special coordination mechanism made up of Party, military, and government representatives headed by L. V. Smirnov -- manages the defense industrial sector. It functions under the overall supervision of D. F. Ustinov of the Party Secretariat. A core group of eight ministries is represented on the VPK by their respective ministers, including the Ministries of Defense Industry, Aviation Industry, Shipbuilding Industry, Electronics Industry, Radio Industry, Machine Building, Medium Machine Building, and General Machine Building. These eight ministries are identifiable by their omission from the lists of "plan fulfillment indices" published quarterly and annually for the rest of the Soviet economy.

During the May 1972 summit negotiations, this mechanism proved to be a significant link in the SALT decision-making process. The VPK has had its representation on the SALT delegation in the persons of P. S. Pleshakov (now Minister of the Radio Industry) and A. N. Shchukin, who is Deputy Chairman of the VPK and has

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confirmed that he works for Smirnov. At a critical stage in the talks on arms limitations, Smirnov himself was assigned to work directly and authoritatively with Dr. Kissinger in resolving a number of remaining difficulties.

Academy of Sciences

Certain sections of the USSR Academy of Sciences appear to have some influence, albeit indirect and limited, on SALT matters. Leading scientists in the defense research sector, a large and influential element in the Academy, are consulted by the political leadership on technical aspects of arms limitations affecting weapons systems on which they have worked. In addition, through unofficial contacts with Western scientists, scholars, and defense intellectuals, Soviet scientists provide a conduit for ideas and information concerning political, scientific, and strategic questions related to SALT.

Two foreign area research institutes of the Academy -- the Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the Institute of the United States and Canada -- provide information and analysis supportive of SALT policy-making primarily in the political and economic area. Both institutes maintain special sectors dealing with political-military and arms control aspects of American policy. The sectors are largely staffed by retired

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DATE: OCT 2003

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military officers and to a lesser extent civilian specialists. The Institute of World Economy and International Relations also contains a closed military-technical sector which does classified research. Institute researchers are known to provide background and briefing papers on SALT matters to the leadership, and at times the directors of these Institutes have served as ad hoc advisors to Brezhnev.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' input into SALT policy is believed to be largely limited to the diplomatic and political aspects of the negotiations, including developing tactics for the negotiations, the drafting of treaty language, and international legal considerations. At least three divisions within the Ministry have provided delegates and advisors for SALT and backstop the negotiations from Moscow. They are the International Organizations Department, the USA Department, and the Administration for Planning Foreign Policy Measures from which SALT delegate Karpov came. The last named organization is not a formal planning body. It does not set goals, but is concerned with procedures for securing implementation of Party policy directives.

The Ministry's influence on SALT is exercised largely through certain key individuals. Four of its leading officials who are

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closely involved with SALT probably contribute to high-level decision-making.

Foreign Minister Gromyko is concerned with SALT policy in the general context of his responsibilities for dealing with US officials at the highest levels, as a Politburo member, and as, at least occasionally, a participant in Defense Council proceedings. Since 1974 Gromyko has been increasingly involved in direct meetings with Dr. Kissinger on SALT.

Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin, has been an important supplementary channel of communication and negotiation with the US administration, and he can readily draw on 13 years experience in interpreting American politics. The Dobrynin-Kissinger channel provided confidential and informal communications between the top Soviet and American leaders, through which an impasse between the SALT delegations was broken by the 20 May 1971 understanding. Dobrynin has been a central figure in all summit meetings. He is known to have Brezhnev's trust and confidence and has the right to report directly to the Party leader.

Another MFA figure who has been prominent at US-Soviet summits and Gromyko-Kissinger meetings is Georgy Korniyenko, a specialist in US affairs who from 1966 to 1975 headed the MFA's USA Department. In 1969 and 1970, Korniyenko was a delegate to SALT. Last October he was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister.

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Deputy Foreign Minister Semenov, of course, heads the Soviet delegation at SALT, but his influence is probably limited to the tactical details of the negotiations. The negotiating latitude of the Soviet delegation is tightly controlled by Moscow, limiting the possibility for independent initiatives. In private bilaterals with Ambassador Johnson, for example, Semenov seldom departs from prepared typed briefs.

The one member of the Soviet delegation who appears to have special authority to probe US positions and suggest alternative approaches is VPK Deputy Chairman Shchukin. This authority, illustrated by the private initiative on MIRV verification he made with Dr. May last session, is unique to the Soviet delegation and may be a function of Shchukin's claimed special relationship with Brezhnev. Shchukin has stated that he was selected as a principal delegate by the top political leadership and has a direct reporting and liaison function with Brezhnev to whom he provides personal assessments of the negotiations.

Some observers have speculated that in late 1967 or early 1968 Soviet preparations for SALT included the establishment of a special Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of Defense working group to study issues and draft positions for higher-level review. This cannot be confirmed, and as a rule, direct inter-agency coordination between government bureaucracies without intervening Party

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DATE: OCT 2003

supervision is not permitted. It is more likely that routine decision-making and backstopping in Moscow falls within the province of the special group in the Central Committee referred to above (pp. 6-7) which brings together under Party auspices representatives from various ministries and agencies involved in SALT. This process suggests that the coordination of Foreign Ministry and Defense views on SALT occurs above the ministerial level and within the purview of the Party's Central Committee.

Decision-making at the Summit

The foregoing discussion has presented the general framework in which Soviet policy on arms limitations is formulated. Summit-level negotiations, however, exert unique pressures as they compress the time available for decision-making and turn decision-makers into negotiators. The evidence from summit periods reflects the interaction of personalities and institutions from the military, the defense-industrial sector, and the Party apparatus when an issue of military policy such as SALT is in the final phases of planning.

Prior to and during summit-level negotiations, Brezhnev has
relied directly on the advice and support of the military

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leadership was not present either at the formal or working-level

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DATE: OCT 2003

negotiations, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was evident that the military fully participated in the final decisions. He was in contact with Grechko on a number of issues, and told him at one point that he valued Grechko not only as Defense Minister, but also as a political figure.

This pattern has continued. During the Moscow summit in late June-early July 1974 and the Vladivostok summit in November 1974, Generals Kozlov (First Deputy Chief of the General Staff) and Afonsky (former advisor to the Soviet SALT delegation) directly participated (in the working-level discussions) as experts.

The key military organization involved in SAL planning has been the General Staff

During the 1972 summit, General Kulikov, Chief of the General Staff and his First Deputy General Ogarkov were involved in formulating the Soviet draft texts for Article III of the Interim Agreement and the Protocol which dealt with SLBM levels.

On the evening of 23 November 1974, the General Staff's Operations Directorate in Moscow was preparing preliminary estimates of Soviet force levels while awaiting information from General Kozlov on the progress of the SAL talks taking place at Vladivostok. The estimates were to be based on the final agreed figure up to 1985.

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The coordination of the planning and staffing of Soviet positions on outstanding SALT issues has been exercised through Party channels

In particular, Party Secretary D. F. Ustinov has appeared to perform a central coordinating role [redacted] with General Kulikov, his deputies and officials from the Central Committee's Defense Industries Department.

Working closely with Ustinov in this role has been N. N. Detinov, who in the past was associated with VPK matters, was identified in 1974 as Deputy Chief of the Central Committee's Defense Industry Department, and was present at Vladivostok in November 1974 as an "armaments advisor" of the Central Committee.

Technical Staff support to Ustinov in his coordinating role is probably provided by the VPK

The participation of VPK Chairman, L. V. Smirnov, in the working-level negotiations during the 1972 summit indicates the involvement of the VPK in SALT planning and support. While his presence and role on the Moscow negotiating team could have been attributed to his expertise in Soviet weapons programs and his close relationship with Ustinov, it was obvious to US negotiators that Smirnov had a tremendous research and support capability behind him. Such a capability may have been drawn from the

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DATE: OCT 2003

Commissions's permanent staff, which is supplemented by experts from technical committees of the defense industries.

Prior to and during a summit, Soviet positions on the SALT issues being negotiated are probably formulated and arbitrated within the Defense Council with recommendations sent to the Politburo for final approval.

Probably not all SAL-related decisions require the Politburo's stamp of approval and it may indeed have delegated authority to the Defense Council as a subcommittee of the Politburo to decide the more technical issues that arise during summits and those high-level meetings which precede and prepare the way for summits. On 26 October 1974, for example, the Defense Council met immediately prior to Dr. Kissinger's final meeting with Brezhnev. This meeting preceded the Vladivostok summit by one month.

Major initiatives, however, require a vote of the full Politburo. During the Moscow summit in July 1974, the Politburo met [] to consider a US proposal on SALT.

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